



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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## **Baucus Leads Effort to Protect Social Security in Rural America**

*Senator Joins Colleagues and Other Organizations to Protect Social Security Benefits in Rural Areas*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) After a report released today shows that rural America is twice as likely to depend on Social Security than those living in non-rural areas, U.S. Senator Max Baucus said a plan to privatize Social Security would have devastating effects on those living in rural communities.

“In my home state of Montana, a largely rural state, over 164,000 Montanans rely on Social Security and I will not support a plan that would mean deep benefits cuts for them,” Baucus said. “Also, I cannot support privatizing Social Security as it would add trillions of dollars to the debt. We need to strengthen Social Security for generations to come and I’m committed to working together with my Congressional colleagues and others to make that happen.”

A report issued today by the Institute for America’s Future finds that rural communities depend on income from Social Security nearly twice as much as their metropolitan counterparts. For example, Social Security benefits account for 8.6 percent of income in Montana’s rural communities compared to 5.7 percent in Montana’s non-rural communities. Baucus noted that if Social Security benefits were cut, many rural retirees and people with disabilities would lose a significant portion of their income.

“I cannot support a plan to privatize Social Security,” Baucus said. “Privatizing Social Security would only cut reliable, crucial benefits to those trying to make ends meet in rural America.”

Social Security is particularly important to rural communities because rural areas tend to have more elderly and rural workers are more likely to suffer from work related injuries. 90 percent of counties in America with high senior populations are rural. Also, people with disabilities make up 23 percent of the rural population compared to 18 percent in urban areas.

To help represent rural interests in the Social Security debate a number of rural advocacy groups have joined together to form the *Rural Americans for a Secure Future*. The coalition has set out to show how a privatization plan would undermine the reliable Social Security benefits for millions of rural Americans and would add trillions of dollars to the national debt.

“I am proud to support this coalition,” Baucus said. “Those living in rural areas deserve to have their Social Security benefits protected. I am committed to strengthening Social Security, but I will not support a plan that puts rural Americans reliable benefits at risk.”

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